

**ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**  
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**Memorandum**

**To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD**

**From: Transportation Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse**

**Re: July and September, 2005 meetings**

**Date: October 14, 2005**

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The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Transportation Subcommittee met July 22 and September 23, 2005 at the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth. Present for the July meeting were subcommittee members Morse, Burmaster, Ferraro, Ruzala, and Wendel, as well as ENRP Co-Chair Weinstein. Present for the September meeting were subcommittee members Morse, Ferraro, and Wendel.

Cultural Tourism Signage:

At the June general meeting the Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership granted concept approval to the Transportation Subcommittee to further examine and develop a joint application for state transportation enhancement funding for the Niagara Falls Wayfinding, Buffalo Cultural Tourism Directional, and Shoreline Corridor Wayfinding Signage Projects.

Specifically, the Subcommittee was directed to address the following issues:

- Who would be the applicant, or would multiple applicants be bundled;
- Who will prepare the grant application;
- Who would administer the funded contract;
- What will be the source(s) of the local share (typically 20 percent of total cost – cash or in-kind);
- Are the cost estimates and scope of in-kind and cash expenditures similar across all projects;
- What group will coordinate the grant implementation, and should they (or someone else) coordinate appearance, locations, etc. prior to implementation.

The Subcommittee began answering those questions by attempting to identify a lead agent for the application. Subcommittee Chair

Morse suggested the New York State Department of Transportation, and Subcommittee Member Ruzala suggested Empire State Development. ENRP Co-Chair Weinstein added that the groups behind the three proposals should be brought to the table to work out these issues. Work is continuing on organizing and unifying (where practical) the projects. Finally, Subcommittee Member Wendel pointed to the Niagara Wine Trail's signage, and asked what lessons could be learned from their successful installation of signage.

#### Lewiston-Niagara on the Lake Ferry:

Subcommittee Member Ferraro briefed the group about the ferry project that shuttled 1,040 passengers between Lewiston and Niagara on the Lake on September 17, making 15 trips each way on its one-day trial. Response exceeded the expectation of 500 passengers. The Whirlpool Jet Boats were used for the trial, and were donated by the company. Passengers were split about evenly as to where they were visiting. Customs were set up to expedite the process, and businesses saw an upswing on that day. Ferraro noted that this was ENRP Co-Chair Burmaster's idea, and that the okay has been given to go ahead with the project based on the pilot's response.

#### Bio and Alternative Fuels:

The subcommittee continued discussion on bio-fuels and alternative fuels. Specifically, the question was asked whether it costs more in energy to produce bio-fuels than the output from their production. On alternative fuels, Ferraro noted that Niagara County has an application pending to look at the feasibility of crushing soybean and corn. The farming community has been receptive, and as such this could be a Niagara County counterpart to the quick cool project. Ruzala added that the NFTA is part of a consortium across New York State to purchase bio-diesel vehicles. The subcommittee will continue to examine current efforts and possibly leverage support for these projects.